

Making beautiful music

A new classical festival draws renowned participants

By Robert Knox
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

DUXBURY — Matt Pierce teaches cello at the South Shore Conservatory, but he'll go back to being a student this week at the Duxbury Music Institute and Festival. The 13-day summer program in studying and performing classical music has drawn an internationally renowned faculty and talented student body to play beautiful music in beautiful settings — and area residents also get the benefit.

In its first year, the Music Institute and Festival is an intensive program for solo and chamber music performance. Each student receives four hours of private instruction and at least three hours of chamber group coaching, plus — and here's the important part for local music-lovers — almost daily performances. Those student performances are free to area residents who want to listen in.

One such offering is today at 5 p.m. at the Ellison Center for the Arts, the South Shore Conservatory's Duxbury campus.

In addition to student recitals, the faculty musicians will perform five public concerts in various Duxbury venues through Aug. 4. The faculty events range in price from free to \$100 per ticket.

Some of the concerts take place in local private homes — “gorgeous mansions,” according to the conservatory's Lance Valentine, who acknowledged the houses can be as big an attraction as the music.

Judging by the readiness of local volunteers to prepare 1,500 meals for festival participants, there is a good appetite for an infusion of fine music in the area.

“The community has really embraced it,” Valentine said. Mini Janner, 12, of Duxbury — whose daughter studies in a string program offered by South Shore Conservatory — coordinated the volunteer effort.

The institute's faculty will be put up in area homes. Its 35 students, some from as far away as South Korea, will be quartered in the town's two religious retreat facilities.

“These are high-level students who want professional careers in music,” Valentine said.

Among the local students will be Pierce, a 31-year-old Mansfield resident, who has taught cello for two years at the conservatory, a regional music school. He says that the opportunity to work with renowned teachers and talented students was too good to pass up.

Nearly two weeks’ “immersion” in pushing the envelope with top-notch classical musicians, he says, “can be a life-altering experience.”

Stephen Deitz, a South Shore Conservatory piano teacher and the institute's chief organizer, worked with Oxana Yablonskaya, a visiting artist, to gather a top-level faculty and recruit students for the upcoming festival.

Yablonskaya toured the Ellison Arts Center last year when she was invited to perform and teach at the conservatory's headquarters facility in Hingham. She was impressed by the facility and the town. “She said, ‘This is really beautiful. You should have a music festival down here,’” Valentine recalled.

The Moscow-born pianist will give one of the institute's master classes. In addition to Deitz and Yablonskaya, the faculty includes pianist Yuri Kim of South Korea, a member of the Mannes School of Music faculty in New York; pianist Nelly Akopian-Tamarina of the Prague School of Music; and pianist Maxim Fedotov of the Moscow Conservatory.

Also on the faculty list: violinist Oleh Krysa of the Eastman School of Music; violist Karen Ritscher of Rice University; cellist Dimitry Yablonsky of the Russian Philharmonic Orchestra; flutist Robert Dick of New York University and the Aaron Copland School of Music; flutist Carol Wincenc of The Juilliard School; and singer Robert White of The Juilliard School.

The faculty concerts take place in the Duxbury Performing Arts Center on Alden Street (seating is restricted to the large auditorium's 400-seat front section for the intimacy of chamber music); the Ellison center on St. George Street; the town's senior center on Mayflower Street (which boasts an auditorium seating over 100); and two private homes.

“We want to reach out to get to new audiences,” Valentine said of the festival's venue diffusion.

The free student recitals take place today, tomorrow, and Monday at 5 p.m. at the Ellison center. Program details for these performances are available by calling 781-934-2731, ext. 17, within 24 hours of the scheduled performance.

Tomorrow at 7 p.m., a faculty concert at the senior center will feature Kim, Ritscher, Yablonskaya, Krysa, and Yablonsky performing music by Prokofiev, Brahms, and Shostakovich. Tickets are \$25.

On Saturday a free master class taught by two faculty members takes place at the Ellison from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. That evening a faculty concert takes place at the McGrath home. Tickets are \$100.

The weekend's high-profile event is the free Sunday in the Park concert from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the Duxbury town green off Washington Street. The theme will be “Janglewood East,” with a tent for the performance and grassy areas for relaxing and picnics. The faculty will perform in a variety of trios and quartets. The challenge for organizers: moving pianos.

On Monday, in addition to the student recital, a free 6:15 p.m. seminar on “Controlling Performance Anxiety” by Dr. Jane Viemeister takes place in the Ellison.

On Tuesday at 6 p.m. a free chamber music student competition takes place at the Ellison Center. Divided into small group ensembles, students will get to show off what they've learned.

On Wednesday, the solo student competition will be held at 6 p.m. in the Ellison. The next day — Thursday — at 7:30 p.m. the winners give a concert in the Reed home. Tickets are \$100.

And on Friday the festival winds up with an all-faculty chamber concert at 7:30 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center, including music by Beethoven, Lutoslawski, Mozart, Rachmaninoff, and Shostakovich.

To order tickets to paid concerts, go to the website, www.southshoreconservatory.org.

For more information, call the conservatory's Hingham campus at 781-749-7565, ext. 10, or the Ellison Center at 781-934-2731, ext. 10.

Robert Knox can be contacted at rc.knox@gmail.com.

ELLISON CENTER FOR THE ARTS

*Nearly two weeks' immersion in pushing the envelope
with top-notch classical musicians
'can be a life-altering experience.'*

MATT PIERCE, cello teacher at South Shore Conservatory



Festival director Stephen Deltz (front) prepares to perform with Matt Pierce and Beth MacLeod.

BOSTON GLOBE

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 1994

SOUTH SHORE CONSERVATORY